the weighted average cost of production of ONGC & OIL and return on capital employed. Its impact on pool account during 1996-97 is estimated to be Rs. 744 crores. The prices of petroleum products, are administered by the Government through the oil pool account mechanism. The position of the oil pool account is monitored on a continuous basis and measures taken to contain the deficit.

Shortage of LPG in Divisional Headquarters

602. DR. RANBIR SINGH:
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether an acute shortage of LPG was reported on the 10th July, 1996, in the Divisional Headquarters, Jalpaiguri;

(b) whether similar shortage was also reported in other divisional headquarters of country during the period from July 1996 to January 1997;

(c) whether LPG connections booked in 1991 and onwards have not been released on maturity of turn, due to the above reasons;

(d) whether Government propose to take steps to remove the artificial shortage created by the vested interests; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Shortage of LPG was reported in other Divisional Headquarters of the country also during the period July '96 to November '96.

(c) No, Sir. Connections are being released on maturity.

(d) and (e) The Oil Companies conduct raids under the LPG Control Order to keep check on artificial shortage of LPG also to ensure that LPG is used only for authorised purposes. Inspections are also being carried out at regular intervals by officers of the Oil Companies. More connections are being released all over the country every year.

हिमाचल प्रदेश में तेल चयन बोर्ड

603. श्री महेश्वर सिंह: क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि हिमाचल प्रदेश में 7 मार्च, 1995 को तेल चयन बोर्ड का गठन किया गया था;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि केवल एक महीने बाद ही 3 अप्रैल, 1995 को मंत्रालय के दिनांक 18 अप्रैल, 1995 के कार्यालय आदेश द्वारा इस बोर्ड को भंग कर दिया गया था;

(ग) यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं;

(घ) क्या बोर्ड पर भाई-भतीजावाद और भ्रष्टाचार का आरोप लगाया गया है;

(ङ) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(च) सरकार ने इन शिकायतों को दूर करने के लिए क्या-क्या कदम उठाए हैं?

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री टी॰ आर॰ बालू): (क) जी, हां।

(ख) से (ङ) हिमाचल प्रदेश के लिए गठित तेल चयन बोर्ड 3 अप्रैल, 1995 से सार्वजनिक हित में भंग कर दिया गया था।

(च) तेल चयन बोर्डों, जिनमें हिमाचल प्रदेश का तेल चयन बोर्ड भी सम्मिलित है, का क्रियाकलाप वर्तमान में आस्थगित है। चयन प्रक्रिया के पुनरसक्रियण पर सरकार गम्भीरता के साथ विचार कर रही है।

MOU Between ONGC and UNOCAL Corporation for Gas Reserves in Tripura

604. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC has signed a Memoradum of Understanding with the US based UNOCAL Corporation for

studying the gas reserves in Tripura and the economic feasibility of a cross country pipeline to Bangladesh and Myanmar;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) by when the study is proposed to be completed?

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) ONGC has signed a MOU with M/s. UNOCAL Corporation of USA for joint study of Tripura area (outside the exploration block AA-ON-3 offered by Government of India).

(b) The objectives of the joint study as per MOU are:—

(1) To review and determine the hydrocarbon resources already discovered by ONGC.

(2) To determine the potential for new reserves to be discovered; and

(3) to investigate the potential for commercially exploiting these resources.

(c) Study is to start in March, 1997 and is expected to be completed in a period of eighteen months.

Interest on Security Deposits for LPG Connections

605. SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the purpose of charging the security deposit from consumers for providing new LPG connections, the manner in which this amount is utilised by Government and the total amount of security deposits with Government upto December 31, 1996;

(b) whether Government propose to pay interest on such deposits, on the lines of Ministry of Telecommunications; if not, whether Government would consider such a step; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor and what is the justification for blocking such huge amounts received from the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PATROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The deposit is taken by the oil companies as security against LPG equipment loaned to the customers and is refundable as and when the equipment is surrendered.

The deposit is utilised to maintain adequate inventory of LPG equipments in usable condition at all times so as to service the customer's requirements. On an average 1.5 cylinder per customer is required to be maintained by the oil companies for servicing their requirements.

As on 31.12.96 the security deposit collected by oil comapneis was about Rs. 2386 crores.

Trial production from two weels in East Godavari District

606. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any trial production from two more wells of ONGC, Ponnamenda-I and Malikipalli-I, in the Krishna Godavari Basin in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether findings of the surveys in these two belts have been encouraging;

(c) if so, what is the total quantity of crude oil likely to be available from these two belts; and

(d) by when crude oil is likely to be obtained from these wells?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. One location each on these two gas bearing prospects have been released for drilling. The total quantity of gas available can be assessed on the basis of the drilling results.